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The Impact Of Deforestation On Tourism Development In Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Regrettably, deforestation affects the sustainability of the environment, perceived as a significant driver of income and great job opportunities for local communities, which as a result deliver significant incentives to conserve the bio diversity and conserving the quality of the environment can attract more tourists, which as a result increased funds to the government for biodiversity conservation. Because of the increase in tourism together with limited environmental resources capacity. There is need to raise the awareness on the issue of the impact of deforestation on biodiversity for tourism development and environment conservation. This paper therefore, review the impact of deforestation on tourism and natural resources towards sustainable development and the paper conclude that, there is need for environmental strategies that can support environment conservation.

Keywords: Deforestation, Environmental Impact, Sustainability, Conservation, Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in a place outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year (12months) for leisure, business or other purposes. Tourism has been one of the essential sectors to both developed and developing countries. Apart from the significantly contributes to the government revenues, national income and foreign exchange earnings, tourism sector also creates job opportunities business opportunities for the communities.

Tourism especially marine and coastal tourism is one of the fastest growing areas within the country Nigeria largest industry, yet despite the increased awareness of the country economic and environmental significance of tourism, it is only in recent years. Scientific researches have emerged (Hall, 2001).

Deforestation is the removal of stand of trees or forest from land that is then converted to non forest used. Conversion of forest land to tourist centres, farms or urban use, the removal of trees without sufficient reforestation has resulted in habitat damage and biodiversity loss. Therefore, this paper review some tourism literature, which focuses on deforestation impact of tourism.

The negative impact of tourism occurs; when the level of visitor use is greater than the environment's ability to cope with its uses within acceptable limit of change. Uncontrolled conventional tourism process potential threats to many natural areas around the country. It creates pressure on an area and lead to the impact such as physical impact, environmental impact of tourism development, natural habitat loss, increased pressure on endangered species and heightened exposed to forest fires and can force local populations to compete for the use of critical resources, such as hotels, infrastructure etc.

The Decrease of Natural Resources

Tourism development can put pressure on natural resources when it increases consumption in areas where resources are already inadequate or scarce.

Water Resources

Water, especially fresh water is one of the most critical natural resources. In the tourism industry generally over uses water resource for hotels, swimming pools, and personal use of water by tourists. This can result water shortage and degradation of water supplies, as well as generating a greater volume of waste water.

In the dry and hot region like the North western and north eastern part of the country, there are issues of water scarcity is of particular concern, because of the hot climate and the tendency of tourists to consume more water when on holiday than they do at home. The amount used can run up to 440 liters a day (UNEP 1999). If the water come from wells over pumping can cause saline intrusion into the ground water.

Local Resources

Tourism can crate great pressure on local resources such as energy, food and other raw materials that may already be in short supply. Greater extraction and transportation of these resources exacerbates physical impacts associated with their deforestation and exploitation. Because of the seasonal character of the industry, many destinations have ten (10) times more inhabitant in the high season than in the low season. High demand is placed upon these resources to meet the high expectation tourists often have.

Land Degradation

The important land includes minerals, fossil, fuels, fertile soil, forest, wet land and wildlife, increased construction of tourism and recreational facilities has increased pressure on these resources and on scenic landscape. Direct impact on natural resources both renewable and nonrenewable, in the provision of tourist's facilities can be caused by the use of land for accommodation and other infrastructure provision and the use of building materials.

Forest often suffers negative impact of tourism in the form of deforestation caused by fuel wood collection and land clearing. For example, between 2000 and 2010 some 13million hectres of forest were converted to other uses, such as agriculture or lost through natural causes, such as forest, recreation along the Yankari game reserved are already suffering the effect of deforestation can use four to five kilograms of wood a day (UNEP, 1999)

Solid Waste

In areas with high concentration of tourist's activities and appealing natural disposal can be a major despoiler of the natural environment, rivers, scenic areas and roadsides. For example, this tourist centres are been estimated to produce more than 70,000 tons of waste each year. Solid waste can degrade the physical appearance of the water and shoreline and cause the death of marine animals (UNEP 1997)

Sewage

Construction of hotels, recreation and other facilities often leads to the increase sewage pollution. Waste water polluted seas and lakes surrounding tourist attraction, damaging the flora and fauna. Sewage runoff causes serious damage to coral reefs because it contains a lot of nutrients and it simulates the growth of algae, which cover the filter feeding corals, hindering their ability to survive. Changes in salinity and transparency can have wide ranging impacts on the coastal environments. And the sewage pollution can threaten the health of humans and animals.

Physical Impact

Attractive landscape sites, such as sandy beaches, lakes, river sides, mountain tops and slopes are often transitional zones characterized by species rich ecosystem. Typical physical impact includes the degradation of such ecosystem.

An eco-system is a geographic area including all the living organisms (people, plants, animals and microorganism) their physical surrounding (such as soil, water and air), and the natural cycles that sustain them. The ecosystem most threatened with degradation are ecologically fragile area such as East southern and South Western part of the country (Nigeria), rain forests, wet lands, mangroves, coral reefs sea grass

beds. Threats to and pressures on these ecosystems are often severe because such places are very attractive to both tourists and developers.

The physical impacts are caused not only by tourism related land clearing and construction, but by continuing tourist activities and long-term changes in local economics and ecologies.

The Physical Impact of Tourism Development

Infrastructure development and construction activities: the development of tourism facilities such as accommodation water supplies, restaurant and recreational facilities can involve in sand mining, bench and sand erosion, soil erosion and extensive paving. In addition, road and airport construction can lead to land degradation and loss of wildlife habitats and deterioration of scenery.

Deforestation and unsustainable use of land: construction of ski resort accommodation and facilities requires clearing forested land. Coastal wetlands are often drained and filled due to lack of more suitable sites for construction of tourism facilities and infrastructure. This activity can cause severe disturbance and erosion of the local ecosystem, even destruction in the long time.

Marina development: development of the marinas and break waters can cause changes in currents and coastlines. Furthermore, extraction of building materials such as sand affects coral reefs, mangroves, and the hinterland forest, lead to erosion and destruction of habitats, in this tourist centres in the country. Mining of coral for resort building materials has damaged fragile coral reefs and depleted the fisheries (Hall 2001).

The Environmental Impacts and Tourism Development

Loss of Biological Diversity

The Effects on Loss of Biodiversity:

1. It threatens our food supplies, opportunities for recreation and tourism, and source of wood, medicines and energy.
2. It interferes the essential ecological functions such as species balance, soil formation and greenhouse gas absorption.
3. It reduces productivity of ecosystem
4. It destabilizes ecosystems and with human caused stresses such as pollution and climate change.

Tourism especially nature tourism, is closely linked to biodiversity and the attraction created by a rich and varied environment. It can also cause loss of biodiversity when land and resources are strained by excessive use, and when impact on vegetation wildlife, mountain, marine, and coastal environments and water resources exceed their carrying capacity. This loss of the biodiversity in fact means loss of tourism potential.

Introduction of exotic species which tourist and supplies can bring in species (like insects, wild and cultivated plants and diseases) that are not native to the local communities or environment can cause enormous disruption and even destruction of ecosystem (WWF 1994)

How Deforestation Impact Affect Tourism

Natural Disasters

Catastrophic such as flood, drought, diseases, wild fire, earthquake can have a serious effect on inbound any domestic tourism and thus on local tourism industries. The outbreak of Lassa fever epidemic, Covid-19 in the past years (2020, 2021 and 2022) for instance severely affected the tourism market and the country economy.

Climate Change

Tourism not only contributes to climate change, but is affected by it as well. Climate change is likely to increase the severity and frequency of storms and severe weather events, which can have disastrous effects on tourism in the affected region. Some of the other impacts that the country risks as a result of global warming are droughts, diseases and heat waves.

These negative impacts can keep tourists away from the holiday destinations, tourists will stay away because of intense heat and out of fear of diseases, insecurity and water shortage (Hall, 2001)

The Issues and Challenges

Highlighted below are some of the issues and challenges facing deforestation on tourism toward sustainable development in Nigeria

Population growth and increase of visitors: the growth of population and visitors in the game reserve and villagers surrounding the game reserve, this villages are 1-5km range from the reserve has an implication for call in demand for food, shelter, hotels and another livelihood. Therefore, with low off farm employment opportunities in the area, the population will exert more pressure on the resource of the reserve. As observed population increases near wildlife rich area increases demand for more land for livelihood maintenance. These phenomena triggered toward migration of wildlife that are endemic to these tourist centres as well as death of other species that were ecological rich to a particular habitat.

Fuel wood extraction: the non-availability of energy option such as kerosene, and cooking gas has made people in the area to resort to fuel wood by cutting trees for their daily cooking. The fuel wood is done by both commercial fuel merchants, who use trucks to evacuate large quantity of wood to capital city e.g Bauchi, Jos etc this hinder sustainable development for tourism in the country.

Hunting and Other Human Activities

There is always going to be conflict these people and the game rangers as more trees and animals will be lost. This can even resort to the loss of life is care is not taken through the understanding of the implication of low income in communities neighboring protected areas prompted World Bank to introduced the Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Project (LEEMP). The project aims at reducing the dependency of local people on the resources of the protected areas of low-income countries depend of the natural resources with the availability as well as its accessibility in supporting their livelihood. Unfortunately, the wrong implementation of the programme due to poor supervision, selfishness has succeeded in some of these tourism centres.

Insecurity

In addition to the lack of sufficient security personnel, control vehicles, shortage of fuel and inadequate functional firearms, the frequent attack on rangers by poachers, visitor and cattle herders exist. There was no appropriate surveillance, the existing protecting equipment were all grounded, new ones are not forth coming and only new Hilux remains as the means of patrolling in some of axis tourism centres. Example Yankeri Game Reserve one Hilux patrol about 2244 square kilometers. The reserve become porous and poaches can easily escape after committing offence and this reduces the morale of the dangers, and does not serve effective deterrent.

The conservation and protection of the tourism center deliberately under mind by corruption and mismanagement.

Monitoring

There is complete absence of established effective monitor for the environment as well as for the animals. They go free within and outside the tourist centers, therefore there is need to increase the security patrol to keep poaches who depend on fauna and flora in this tourist centers for their livelihood.

Also, there is no political will from the government side in protecting these centers. There is a complete absent of modern instrument and techniques for effective identification, quantitative knowledge of rate and trends of deforestation which will help in better planning and management.

Law Enforcement

The existing laws are outdated with time, both economically and socially, these laws were established since when these tourist centre were established. The challenge here is on how to increase the amount of law or penalty enforce on a culprit, also to update the laws through some legislative processes as a Bill is needed. The corruption of government officials is the root cause of deforestation (WRFRU, 2019).

Suggestion and Strategies to Reduce Deforestation on Tourism Development

Ways of reducing deforestation on tourism development must go hand in hand with the improving the welfare cultivators at the forest frontiers. All strategies require cooperation and goodwill. Effective implementation monitoring and enforcement.

Based on the foregoing the following recommendation have been proffered.

- 1. Promote Sustainable Management:** In order to promote sustainable forest management, it must be sustainable ecologically, economically, and socially. Achieving ecological sustainability means that the ecological value of the forest must not be degraded and if possible, they should be improved. This means that Silvia culture and management should not be reduce biodiversity soil erosion should be controlled, soil fertility shall not be lost, water quality on and off site should be maintained and that forest health and vitality should be safeguarded (Chomiter et al 2007).
- 2. Orientation of the general public:** The solution discussed with the most effective if the general public is oriented on the need to preserve the forest that we have and the adverse effects of continuous destruction of the forest.
- 3. Personnel (Manpower):** Staffs needed to the increased and their welfare be standardized in all tourism centres in the country.
- 4. Clear border demarcations of PAS:** boarder demarcations of PAS must be done so as to prevent encroachment by adjoining communities in their quest for farm land, especially were no board zone exist for the PAS
- 5. Federal Government:** Federal government should take over state and local government PAS (forest reserve and game) so as to be able to monitor the activities of the centres.
- 6. Insecurity:** The lack of insufficient patrol vehicles, shortage of fuel and inadequate functional firearms, and the government should employ enough security vehicles and more facilities or equipment in improving the protection of the tourist centres.
- 7. Protection and preservation:** Tourism can significantly contribute to environmental protection conservation and restoration of biological diversity and sustainable use of natural resources. Because of their effectiveness, pristine sites and natural area are identified as valuable and the need to keep the attraction alive can lead to creation of national parks and wildlife parks.
- 8. Regulatory Measures:** The measures will helps offset negative impacts for instance controls on the number of tourist activities and movement of visitors within the protected area can limit impacts of the ecosystem and help maintain the integrity and vitality of the site. Such limits can also reduce the negative impacts on resource and deforestation.

CONCLUSION

There is an encroachment on the part of the reserve and some tourist centre while at the same time woodlands are being converted in non-forest land. The tourism centre or reserve have suffered in the part and is continuing to be suffering as demand on forest resource is a treat to its future existence. For example, Yankari Game Reserve Centre in the country (Nigeria) the richest wild life sanctuary that contains the largest surviving number of different types of wild animals in the country. One to a number of possible factors such as lack of fund, and unmotivated personnel as well as lack of stiffer penalties for the culprits he controls and management of deforestation phenomenon in the tourist centre and game reserve is currently minimal. There is also a need for government and government departments to be effective, efficient and accountable. it has been recognized that the use of geography information system (GIS) and remote sensing techniques to enhanced data availability are necessary to provide more accurate documentation of the extend and rate of spread of deforestation. These techniques would also provide cost effective estimates of forest change and movement of the wild animals. It was also been established that the main factors affecting the nonperformance of the tourist centres and game reserve includes abuse of office, corruption, weak institutional capacity for forest law enforcement and government, associated with inadequate staff, low morale and poor equipment for forest guards and inadequate training and knowledge of forest legislation.

Therefore, any attempt to control and manage deforestation must be prepared to invest on the understanding of the causal forests.

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